

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 CU-02 SAM-01 /071 W

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P R 061040Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9701

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 1513

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, BM

SUBJECT: STUDENT, LABOR UNREST

REF: RANGOON 1453

1. SITUATION IN RANGOON ON JUNE 6 ANNIVERSARY OF LAST YEAR'S VIOLENCE BETWEEN LABOR AND SECURITY FORCES SOMEWHAT TENSE.

2. AT THE UNIVERSITY, STUDENTS ARE ON CAMPUS BUT HAVE LARGELY SKIPPED CLASSES OR BEEN "EXCUSED" BY PROFESSORS AND SOME MINOR DEMONSTRATIONS OR MINI-RALLIES HAVE BEEN REPORTED; BUS SERVICES SUSPENDED AND GAS STATIONS CLOSED FOR A FEW HOURS MIDDAY IN VICINITY OF UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES. NO VIOLENCE OR ARRESTS ON CAMPUS REPORTED ALTHOUGH A FEW WORKERS AND STUDENTS WERE REPORT-EDLY ARRESTED THIS MORNING NEAR THE TEXTILE MILL. HANDBILLS CIRCULATED FOR PAST TWO DAYS AMONG STUDENTS CALLED FOR CLASS BOYCOTT TODAY AND SENIOR STUDENTS WERE ALLEGED TO BE DRESSED IN BLACK IN MEMORY OF SLAIN WORKERS.

3. IN AN APPARENT EFFORT TO DIFFUSE LABOR TENSION SOMEWHAT, GUB ANNOUNCED JUNE 5 THAT OVERTIME PAY FOR WORKERS WILL BE INCREASED (AMOUNT UNSPECIFIED) AND DISTRIBUTION OF CLOTHING MATERIALS THROUGH COOPS IN RANGOON WILL BE STEPPED UP; PRESS EDITORIALS
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PROMPTLY CITED THESE AS EVIDENCE OF GOVERNMENT'S CONCERN FOR

WORKERS PLIGHT. AND IN A PR CAMPAIGN ALLEGEDLY INSTITUTED BY NE WIN, BSPP CENTRAL EXECUTIVE MEMBERS ACCOMPANIED BY CABINET MINISTERS HAVE BEEN DISPATCHED TO MEET WITH STUDENTS AND WORKERS TO EXPLAIN GUB POLICIES. CEC MEMBER DR. HLA HAN AND MIN ED DR. KHIN MAUNG WIN MET WITH 500 STUDENTS OF THE VETERINARY SCHOOL JUNE 5. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, THEY BLAMED FOOD SHORTAGES ON POPULATION GROWTH, WORLD INFLATION, ETC., AND FAULTED CORRUPT OR INDISCIPLINED WORKERS FOR INEFFICIENCY OF THE SYSTEM. PRESS DID NOT MENTION HLA HAN'S WARNING TO STUDENTS NOT TO GET OUT OF LINE. AUDIENCE WAS EVIDENTLY LESS DOCILE AT THE INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS WHERE HLA HAN AND THE MIN ED RATHER BRAVELY VISITED TODAY. ACCORDING TO ONE OBSERVER, STUDENTS SPENT CONSIDERABLE TIME HARRANGING THEIR VISITORS WITH CRITICISMS OF THE NE WIN GOVERNMENT. ON THE LABOR SIDE, CEC MEMBER DR. MAUNG MAUNG AND HEALTH MINISTER COL. KYI MAUNG MET WITH MYANMA OIL COMPANY WORKERS JUNE 5. THEY ADMITTED THAT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS WERE DETERIORATING BUT ASSURED THEIR LISTENERS THAT THE BSPP WAS GUIDED BY THE THESIS THAT THE PEOPLE'S MATERIAL NEEDS CAME FIRST, "AS OFTEN REMINDED BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARTY."

4. COMMENT: GUB, STUDENTS AND WORKERS THUS FAR APPEAR TO BE AVOIDING SERIOUS CONFRONTATION. MOOD IS SURLY, HOWEVER, AND UNPREDICTABLE INCIDENT COULD ESCALATE LEVEL OF UNREST. OSBORN

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